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**Cultural Identity in Rudyard Kipling's *Kim***

**Abstract**

The paper examines Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1901) through the lens of postcolonial theories by Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, and Richard Jenkins, focusing on concepts such as the Other, hybrid identity, and cultural identities. It critiques the imperialistic mindset of the West towards the East, illustrating how British imperial power in India perpetuates cultural hegemony through stereotypical portrayals of natives as uncivilized and inferior. The characters Kim and Babu exemplify hybrid identities that serve the British Raj, as they strive to assimilate into British culture, reflecting the complexities of colonial dynamics. Their mimicry of British behavior results in an identity crisis, placing them in a liminal space that highlights the ambivalence experienced by both colonized individuals and colonizers. This mimicry challenges the dominance of colonial discourse, suggesting that the superficial adoption of British traits creates anxiety and undermines the supposed superiority of colonial rule. Additionally, Jenkins' perspective on Kim's identity reveals that it is shaped by his interactions with diverse cultural groups, emphasizing the fluidity and complexity of cultural identity within the colonial context. The paper underscores the intricate relationships between identity, culture, and power in a postcolonial framework.

**Key Terms:** Other, Hybrid identity, Ambivalence, Mimicry, Cultural identity

## 1. Introduction

Mainly known for his glorification of British Imperialism, Joseph Rudyard Kipling, born on December 30, 1865, is an English poet, short-story writer, and novelist. He was born in Bombay, British India, and taken by his family to England at the age of five- year kid. Kipling is best well-known for his works of fiction, including *The Jungle Book* (1894), *Kim* (1901), several short stories, including *The Man Who Would Be King* (1888), and his poems, including *Mandalay* (1890), *Gunga Din* (1890). He is recognized as a significant innovator in the art of the short story, and he stands out as one of England's most remarkable writers of prose and poetry during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These children's books are monumental classics of children's literature, and his best works are said to elucidate a versatile and remarkable narrative gift. The author Henry James talks about him: “Kipling strikes me personality as the most complete man of genius, as distinct from fine intelligence, that I have ever known” (Lancelyn 68). Kipling's literary accomplishments were acknowledged in 1907 when he received the Nobel Prize in Literature, becoming the first writer in the English language to earn this distinguished award. His novel *Kim* is among the most celebrated British works about India. Written by an author with imperialist views, it follows the journey of Kim, a hybrid boy and orphaned son of an Irish colonial officer who dies before leaving India. *Kim* is functioning both as a native boy and as a sahib in the novel and is brought up by a native Indian woman. This premise prompts an exploration of intercultural and interracial relationships within the narrative. The ambiguity of Kim’s character, along with Kipling’s ambivalence regarding Indian independence, are crucial elements that stimulate extensive debate surrounding the novel. *Kim* holds a unique place in both Kipling’s life and career as well as in English literature.

It appeared in 1901, twelve years after Kipling left India. Kim for Kipling is only successfully sustained and mature characters of long fiction. Kipling’s fiction consists either of

short stories or of longer works. He can be considered to have rendered the experience of empire with such force. He has remained something of a puzzle for readers of English literature. *Kim*, Kipling's greatest work concentrates on India, because India is the greatest, the most durable, and most profitable of all British colonial possessions. India has acquired an increasingly massive and influential role in British life, in commerce and trade, industry, politics, ideology, culture, and the imagination. Kipling's role in defining, imagining, and formulating the British Empire's perception of India during its mature phase was extraordinarily important.

Kipling not only writes about India, but he knew of it as well. His father, John Lockwood is a teacher in India. Because he was born in India, he speaks Hindustani during the first years of his life and he is very much like Kim, a Sahib in native clothes. At the age of six, he is taken to England to begin his schooling. His first years of experience in England are appalling and traumatic, furnishing him and enduring subject matter, the interaction between youth and unpleasant authority, which Kipling rendered with great complexity and ambivalence throughout his life.

Kipling returned to India in 1882. His autobiography, *Something of Myself*, is published posthumously. He works as a Journalist in Punjab. His first short stories come out of that experience. At that time, he begins writing his poetry. He left India in 1889 and never went again to there. Then the rest of his life, he lives on the memories of his early Indian years. After the First World War his vision considerably he remains an imperialist, his stories of England and the future, husbands with eccentric animals, and quest-theological tales. Employing signs of cultural imperialism in terms of transforming cultural identity, for example, is one of the other problems that the researcher tries to focus on and interpret based on postcolonial features. And the concepts of social identifications in the light of socio-cultural difference and similitude, for instance, the researcher is to anchor on socio- cultural identity crisis of the characters of the

novel. This paper is based on library studies, and it attempts to get help from significant entries and comments as well.

### Literature Review

*Kim* alongside with Kipling's other works try to portray his imperial experience in India. In Kipling's fiction, the Indian society and socio-cultural approaches must be studied. *Kim* shows the problems of several Indian people in general, and *Kim*, a hybrid, and an old man in particular, who follows cultural and social standards which are always based on their personal choices. In this novel, Kim and his colleagues do their best for society according to the British Empire and norms. They find other ways of serving their society and serving themselves.

*Kim* and his comrades, in their mission against some other French and Russian colonizers, are shown as taking the change of their lives. From physical, and psychological viewpoints, they are to make changes in their lives, and in their community. They create a new socio-cultural choice. This novel is a main part of the growing imperial experience and dynasty in India that creates new visions for readers and new possibilities for the Indian community.

There are also some articles about *Kim*. In the first article, Kipling's Postcolonial Ambivalence: Who is *Kim*? (2004) Mehmet Ali Celik shows both concepts of racial and cultural hybridity. He posits that Kim embodies both racial and cultural hybridity, exemplified through the use of hybrid language that incorporates elements of both Urdu and English within the narrative. The article contends that the mutual prejudices present in Kipling's *Kim* are similarly reflected in the works of postcolonial novelists, showcasing the same ambivalence characteristic of postcolonial literature. This accolade suggests that Kipling's writing reflected a distinct perspective that set him apart from the conventional colonial writers of his era.

In Zohreh T. Sullivan's (1993) attitude, *Kim* is the story of a boy who leaves his favorite Lahore street life to be at the British Secret Service. This change from India as a "site of desire to India as Site of power and control" is Kipling's "particular territorializing of desire into

power because desire is coded within a colonial system that sanctifies control and domination” (55). In addition, Benita Parry, in her essay “The Content and Discontent of Kipling’s Imperialism” (1988) states that *Kim* “Confidently reaffirms its validity” (54). The English curator of the museum with his pile of books, “photographs and reproductions, and his acquaintance with the labors of European scholars” tries to learn about his own heritage (ibid).

Roger Sale, in *Fairy Tales and After: from Snow White to E.B. White* (1978), concludes that "Kim is the apotheosis of the Victorian cult of childhood, but it shines now as bright as ever, long after the Empire's collapse" (221). Since its publication, *Kim* has been adapted into multiple films, inspired numerous authors, and has been directly referenced in various literary works, in addition to having a town named after it. In Zohreh T. Sullivan's notion, *Kim* is the story of a boy who leaves his favorite Lahore street life to be at the British Secret Service. This change from India as "site of desire to India as site of power and control" is Kipling's "particular territorializing of desire into power because desire is coded within a colonial system that sanctifies control and domination" (55).

Therefore *Kim* is a split between the "desire to identify" with and to "correct the errors of his native peers" (Said 1994: 2). Benita Parry, in her essay "The Content and Discontent of Kipling's Imperialism" (1988), states that *Kim* "confidently reaffirms its validity" (54). The English curator of the museum with his pile of books, "photographs and reproductions and his acquaintance with the labours of European scholars" attempts to learn about his own heritage (ibid).

By gathering information about India's environment and customs, "the Ethnological Survey makes available to the government" and that knowledge is important to exercise British power properly (ibid). Don Randall, in his essay "Ethnography and the Hybrid Boy in Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*" (1996), states that the novel *Kim* is an "ethnography immediately raises a question about Kipling's status as an ethnographer" (79). He believes that Kipling's

representation of India is in connection with the "implicit and explicit relations" with British imperialism in India (ibid 80).

## 2. Methodology

A wide range of such issues as social, anthropological, historical studies and so on centralized in postcolonialism studies among which one might refer to the phenomenon of orientalism, the way Eastern countries are depicted malignantly by Western culture, the relation between power and knowledge, powerful and powerless and their social status; the identity crisis of colonized people; the colonized people's resistance to colonizing culture, religion and ideology under the control of colonization and things of the same that will be securitized throughout the thesis.

Edward W. Said, Homi K. Bhabha, and many critics of postcolonial studies have concentrated on significant aspects of this theory. As a key figure of post-colonialism, Edward Said coined the term orientalism to consider all the misrepresentations of the West regarding the Eastern countries. Homi K. Bhabha, following Said, has concentrated on hybridity.

Edward Said was born in Jerusalem, British-occupied Palestine, and moved with his family to Cairo after the 1947 Partition by Israel. He is educated in Cairo and the United States of America. Studying plans at the Julliard School of Music, he got his B. A. degree from Princeton University and his doctorate from Harvard University (1960) and started his job at Columbia University, where he is teaching at the end of his life. He has held visiting professorships at a number of institutions, including Yale University and Stanford University. His desertion was published in 1966 under the title *Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography*. In the next year, after the outbreak of the Arab-Israel war in 1948, Said became a more political critique. This trend in his thinking is remarkable in *Beginnings* (1975), a study of the novel influenced by Michelle Foucault's theories of discourse analysis. His remarkable study, *Orientalism* (1979) was his first main work to answer to the difficulties in the Middle

East. In this volume, he analyzes a great structure of knowledge and power devoted to showing and controlling the orient.

He was interested in the role of the intellectual and wrote many essays on intellectual problems in colonial and postcolonial societies. In 1990, he published his memoir, *Out of Place*, which recounts the privileged yet traumatic upbringing, he experienced in Palestine and Cairo, his involvement with Palestinian causes, and his long academic career in the United States of America. One of Said's last works, published the year after his death, *Humanism and Democrat Criticism* (2004), sums up his humanistic vision and reiterates the need for public intellectuals (Castle 242-243). Orientalism proved especially influential in Middle Eastern studies, where in it transformed the academic discourse of the field's practitioners; of how they define cultures of the Middle East. As an intellectual, Edward Said vigorously discussed and debated the cultural subjects comprised of Orientalism. As Said believes in his *Orientalism* (1978), the First chapter, knowing the Oriental; Imaginative Geography and Its Representations, "A British statesman has even the most superficial knowledge of history, but he is put in a position of supremacy over great raise like the inhabitations of Egypt and countries in the East" (32). The researcher likes to know what Said means by such superficial knowledge not just only of history but of any other issues or in fact of knowledge itself. At first sight, it sounds like that Said means not a deep knowledge or a knowledge that remains on the surface of a thing and cannot disclose the reality of that very thing. Yet deeply being considered, superficial knowledge may seem the one being appear from the appearance of a phenomenon, not from its nature. A piece of knowledge is derived from what appears to be not knowledge, or if it is, it is not a full-time version of knowledge but it is a part-time version of knowledge according to which one cannot stark to know somebody or something. Therefore, an identity, being recognized in this case, is not at all an identity, but a difference. Additionally, it is a negative sort of difference representing the original phenomenon as what it is not. Such a sort



of representation is a miss-representation or miss-identification, culturally or socially speaking, an identity like that, is a non-identity or miss-identity, or to put it better a misunderstood identity since the knowledge on the basis of which an identifies is identified is a miss-knowledge itself.

In addition, the fountain of knowledge is not a will to know, but a will to dominate. And it seems not an absolute, scientific idea that a will to dominate certainly to bring about knowledge. It is sometimes possible that such an attempt would finish with ignorance instead of knowledge, or sometimes with a misunderstanding or miss-identification. And when an individual her/his system acts based on a sort of knowledge, its known object would be one of the most ruined victims of such a type of knowledge. A full version of knowledge feasibly does not come merely from a particular source or will to dominate someone or something, and at the same time denying his or her autonomy. Because if a subject knower of knowledge is to act not rascally, an object knower of knowledge is right enough to know his or her subject knower. Both the knower and knower of knowledge are to be interchanged and replace each other and make change roles in defining and identifying one another. And if it is not so, it resembles to be a racial, discriminative system of knowledge and identification the outcome of which would not be identity but difference.

Such a difference, being made out of a selfish or solipsistic sort of will to dominate, establishes the existence or non-existence of a country on the basis of the knowledge it wills. That is, if there is not knowledge which they mean, the existence of that country is denied and as a consequence it's every other features and aspects would be as well, "the Oriental country - since we know it and it exists, in a sense, *as we know it*" (ibid). Further, such a kind of system of power – leading-to– knowledge which works on differences but not on identity, builds a binary opposition of superiority/ inferiority. As Said illustrates in his *Orientalism*, "Balfour nowhere denies British superiority and Egyptian inferiority: he takes them for granted as he



describes the consequences of knowledge” (ibid). It implies that even the orientalist themselves have accepted those problems of inferiority and superiority as the outcomes of their knowledge consciously and intentionally. The will to know in orientalist intention is not positive at all since it is relied on differences which are originally negative themselves.

Homi K. Bhabha was born in Bombay, India, a member of the ancient Pars community there. He has studied at the University of Bombay, where he got his BA, and Oxford University where he has finished his doctorate. He has held teaching positions at several English universities and at Princeton University, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Chicago.

Bhabha’s notion of Post-colonialism is shaped under the influence of Postmodernism and other new fields of study and some of their influential critics and thinkers whose traces of thoughts could be in the ideas of Bhabha, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, Frantz Fanon, Toni Morrison, Walter Benjamin, etc. “Influenced by the writings of Postcolonial thinkers such as Lacan and Derrida, Bhabha’s works often expose the ambivalence and uncertainty at the heart of seemingly robust, powerful forms of knowledge (McLeod 2005).

His first main work, an edited volume of essays, *Nation and Narration* (1990) brought a broad variety of theorists who challenged the Enlightenment notion of nationality and questioned the potentiality of an essential or Universalist idea of the nation. *The Location of Culture* (1994), a collection of Bhabha’s essays from the 1980s and early 90, is a great success and has remained influential by postcolonial studies. Bhabha has developed the concepts of hybridity and mimicry, which highlight the ambivalence inherent in colonial relations and discourse.

Bhabha has endeavored to present postcolonialism from quite a different angle from other postcolonial thinkers. He has concentrated on the concept of hybridity and hybridization and how the colonized nations unconsciously follow hybridity. Hybridization is assumed as the

emergence of new cultural forms resulting from multiculturalism. Bhabha does not consider colonialism as a locked concept into a specific period, yet a lingering presence that even after its historical cessation is still prevalent and influential in the life and cultural perception of the colonized nations. Bhabha's hybridity is very important for the post-colonialism critics. It refers to the kind of political and cultural discussion between the colonizer and the colonized.

He argues that cultural hybridity arises from the blending of cultures, emphasizing that no culture is entirely pure or homogeneous. In his opinion, every culture is an original mixture within every form of identity. He states that cultures are not separable phenomena but in contact with one another. He also states that both the colonizer and the colonized are interdependent; they have influenced each other, and there are many reactions between them. In *Location of Culture*, Bhabha elaborates on the concept of hybridity in this manner.

Hybridity is the sign of productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities, it is the name of the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that secure the pure and original identity of authority). Hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity. It displays the necessary formation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination. (112)

In general, hybridity refers to a mixture although, "at its simplest, hybridity; however, implies a disruption and force together of any unlike things making deference into sameness" (Young 26). Nowadays, within the field of postcolonial studies, the term portrays the individuals who have lost their sense of belonging to their life being lived between two cultures. Bhabha represents hybridity as "the moment in which the discourse of colonial authority loses its univocal grip on meaning and finds itself open to the trace of the language of the other, enabling (ibid).

Hybridity, a new culture is born that is both similar to and disparate from its mother culture and those carrying the newborn hybridized culture find themselves both in contrast to and in harmony with the genuine culture. In this way, they carry only a part of their true culture

and lose some parts of it. In Bhabha's opinion the confrontation of two cultures, one dominant and one subordinate, accelerates the process of their later on hybridization (ibid).

For a colonizing empire to colonize a colony or a country, one should make the very country or colony a dependent one, not an independent since for a colony or a would-be-colony country, independence is a counter-colonizing strategy or as Homi K. Bhabha(1994) in his *The Location Of Culture*, quoted from Sir Edward Cust states "To give to a colony the forms of independence is a mockery; she would not be a colony for a single hour if she could maintain an independent station" (Bhabha 85). Such a colonizing procedure that the British Empire follows, not permitting a colony to be dependent, can be controversially both a mockery and not to mockery at the same time. According to Crust, to let a colony maintain an independent form is a mockery because colonization is quite a serious imperial practice working really in her colonies to exploit them. Therefore a colony must be dependent on a colonizer and nothing less or more, and she is not allowed to mock such a serious and dogmatic system since mockery is equal to the non-controllability of a colony. However, the British imperial policy of colonization tried to take advantage of such a mockery.

The British Empire did not like to be mocked, but she liked to mock such a colony that was to be independent. To make such a double usage of the process of mockery indicates the non-predictability of the empire's policies to colonize others. In this sense, the empire pretends that she likes and allows the colony to be independent, but not completely. She helps her to be mostly assimilated into her, but not really and absolutely. Therefore, a colony somehow is like a colonizer but not a colonizer. This two-dimensional state is considered to be mimicry. This is through mimicry that the colonizer maintains her authority over the colony. In Bhabha's eyes, "If colonialism takes power [...], it repeatedly exercises its authority through the figures of force" (ibid), one of which can be mockery, being discussed above, which makes a comic figure

out of a severe problem. This two-targeted policy demonstrates the ambivalent feature of mimicry

### 3. Main Discussion

#### 3.1. Cultural Differences in *Kim*

Colonial discourse misrepresents colonized subjects and this course assumes the colonized subjects in the position of subordinates. This discourse assumes that they are inherently incapable of ruling themselves; they need the domination of the West. They are described in a distorted manner as an uncivilized, primitive, and inferior people, and this is because of their uncivilized behavior, thought process, and cultural difference.

The colonial discourse attempts to make the natives believe in their inferiority and primitiveness in order to get natives' consent for this domination. They are defined in a distorted manner: "And, moreover, these foolish natives — if they are not too excited — they always stop to think before they kill a man who soya he belongs to any speedier organization" (*Kim* 291). From the beginning of the novel, Kipling represents how colonizers impose their power over the Indians by showing the Indian boys as Kim's subordinates. It is widely believed that "though he was burned black as any native; though he spoke the vernacular by preference, and his mother-tongue in a clipped uncertain sing-song; though he consorted on terms of perfect equality with the small boys of the bazar; Kim was white" (*Kim* 1). In the novel, the relationship between Kim and the lama shows how Kim is the leader: "looking up at the broad, grinning face, I am a Sahib. My dear Mister O'Hara. And I hope to play the Great Game. You are subordinate to me departmentally at present" (*Kim* 352). Babu is considered in an inferior position to his English colleagues in the Great Game and he needs to be subjected to the English power. Therefore, he and the other Indians are limited to be ruled by the British.

As a result, they are inaccurately represented with different stereotypes. The Indians are shown as people who need to be governed by the British because of the complexity of their

characters. Some of the people that Kim and Lama meet in their journeys are attributed as naive and innocent people being probably in all sorts of danger:

Here were all manners of northern folk, tending tethered ponies and kneeling camels; loading and unloading bales and bundles; drawing water for the evening meal at the creaking well windlasses; piling grass before the shrieking wild-eyed stallions; cuffing the surly caravan dogs; paying off camel-drivers; taking on new grooms; swearing, shouting, arguing, and chaffing in the packed square. (*Kim* 28)

The natives are immersed in their everyday activities and occupations, and they ignore the dangers of being attacked by aggressive individuals. They are governed by despotic or corrupt rulers, and they are not hostile for foreign powers. To be secure, they need to be connected to the British rules which take care of them through the British imperial agents.

Upon mocking the natives as superstitious people, the novel depicts a distorted picture of natives as Said states "as hard-headed, materialistic, questioning, doubting, scoffing at their own superstitions and usages, fond of tests of the supernatural and all this in a curiously light-minded, almost childish fashion" (1978: 247). For instance, in the hills, Kim meets a hopeless father whose child is extremely sick. Because the boy's father is ignorant and superstitious, he thinks that his son had fever, something that is common in the country. Whenever natives do not know the nature of an illness, the people of the hills discard it as fever:

Nay. There is no cure for his hurts, as I see, except he sit for three days in the habit of a bairagi. This is a common penance, often imposed on a fat trader by his spiritual teacher. One priest always goes about to make another priest/ was the retort. Like most grossly superstitious folk, the Kamboh could not keep his tongue from deriding his church. Will thy son be a priest, then? It is time he took more of my white medicine. (*Kim* 229)

They are too simple and ignorant to know the true nature of their illnesses. The Indians are associated with too many stereotypes. The Indians are repeatedly represented as fool, foolish and ignorant:

Oh, he is only Creighton Sahib — a very foolish Sahib, who is a Colonel Sahib without a regiment ". What is his business ? God knows. He is always

buying horses which he cannot ride, and asking questions about the works of God — such as plants and stones and the customs of people. The dealers say that he is the father of fools. (*Kim* 184)

Through this stereotypical image, Kipling wants to show that these people require a more helpful and generous race that can help them.

Mahbub Ali is another stereotypical character, a native Indian, who is in the service of British. He believes that "the English do eternally tell the truth. He said, therefore we of this country are eternally made foolish" (*Kim* 145). In the novel, Indians are misrepresented intentionally: "hill people are all fools" (*Kim* 355). Through making stereotypes of Indians, Kipling tends to represent the importance of the British presence in India and the Indians' need for it: "moreover, these foolish natives if they are not too excited, they always stop to think before they kill a man who says he belongs to any specific organization" (*Kim* 291-292). By these stereotypes, the writer constructs a "regime of truth" of the British administrators' presence (Bhabha, 1994: 96).

Another distorted picture of the Indians in *Kim* is that of the Oriental as a liar. The writer depicts that the natives lie. For example, Huree Babu is described like a liar when he meets Kim for the first time:

Then why talk like an ape in a tree? Men do not come after one from Simla and change their dress for the sake of a few sweet words. I am not a child. Talk Hindi and let us get to the yolk of the egg. Thou art here — speaking not one word of truth in ten. Why art thou here? Give a straight answer. (*Kim* 352)

As Edward Said states, "Orientals are [regarded as] inveterate liars, they are lethargic and suspicious" (1994: 39). One more misrepresentation that is attributed to the Indians is the idea of gossip. Kim knows that whenever he passes among them, he should be careful of his behavior as it is obvious here: "Come here! said the flat thin voice behind the curtain; and Kim came, conscious that eyes he could not see were staring at him" (*Kim* 69). The natives are shown as unpredictable and complex characters that British citizens have difficulties predicting the thoughts and behaviors of the colonized because "one can never fathom the oriental mind" (*Kim* 140). It shows a stereotypical description of the Indians in *Kim*.

In addition, the friendship between Lama and Kim demonstrates how Kim behaves rationally in comparison with Lama. As Lama says:

If he is my chela — does. Will — can anyone take him from me? for, look you, without him I shall not find my river. He wagged his head solemnly. None shall take him from thee. Go, sit among my Baltis, said Mahbub Ali, and the lama drifted off, soothed by the promise. (*Kim* 32)

Lama's submissiveness to Kim depicts the difference between them. This shows the presence of the British authority is important to rule the Indians who are dependent on a foreign power. It shows the division between British and the natives is important in order to govern the non-whites.

Another example is Huree Babu, a Bengali, expresses sorrow when he says "I am unfortunately Asiatic, which is a serious detriment in some respects. And all-so I am Bengali — a fearful man" (*Kim* 229). Kipling characterizes the natives as inferior, foolish, and powerless individuals in need of Western knowledge and normalization. Kim and Lama take journey across various areas which are miles away from civilization. In the hills, they meet people living in primitive houses like huts and are constantly in danger of natural disasters. Because of the primitivism in these areas, the people cannot protect themselves against the surrounding dangers.

They live too close to nature and their protection system is not efficient which shows the lack of culture. Religion is like an obstacle to progress because it prevents the eating of meat. That is why they eat vegetables more. Kipling shows how they worship cows and other fetishes which is primitivism and cultural difference:

Along their track lay the villages of the hill-folk - mud and earth huts, timbers now and then rudely carved with an axe - clinging like swallows nest against the steep, huddled on tiny flats half way down a three-thousand-foot glissade; jammed into a corner between cliffs that funnelled and focused every wandering blast; or for the sake of summer pasture, cowering on a neck that in winter would be ten feet deep in snow. And the people - the sallow, greasy, duffle-clad people, with short bare legs and faces almost Esquimo- would flock out and adore. (*Kim* 237)



Kipling demonstrates the Indians as inferior and primitive people and the English as superior and civilized ones. He puts emphasis on the views of the English people as the chosen race to rule over the supposed primitive people.

In the novel, those who are of white birth have primacy and are in a position of superiority. To be of white birth keeps having the different powers about what Said speaks and which are "political, intellectual, moral and cultural" (1994: 12). Kim enjoys his white supremacy and sometimes speaks with an authoritative tone. He says to Hurree Babu "You are subordinate to me departmentally at present" (*Kim*352). Because he is a white British and Hurree Babu is an Indian, he thinks he can rule over him.

Kipling not only denies the authority of the Indians but also uses his white authority over them in *Kim*. Kipling demonstrates how British rule governs India to show that it should be continuous and eternal. He shows that the Indians are not capable of ruling themselves because of the complexity of their cultural and religious background. By representing the Indians as inferior to the supposedly superior English, he enforces his belief that Indians need to be subjected to British rules. The result is to use the cultural difference as an imperial discourse in the Indian society to compel their advantageous to the Indians.

In *Kim*, Indians do not pay attention to time and it is considered by the Indians: "all hours of the twenty-four are alike to Orientals, and their passenger traffic is regulated accordingly" (*Kim* 40). They do not really consider the importance of time, so they do not care about what they can perform in time. In the other part, it is said: "even an Oriental, with an Oriental's views of the value of time, could see that the sooner it was in the proper hands the better" (*Kim* 35). To Kipling, Indians have a different view of time in comparison with the British, and they do not consider the cultural, economic and social importance of it.

The relationship between Kim and Lama represents a hierarchy, in which Kim is the kind ruler and Lama is his subordinate. Kim takes care of the old man throughout their journeys and he misrepresents Lama like a weak and subordinate person: "was there ever such a disciple as I ? He cried merrily to Lama. All earth would have picked thy bones within ten miles of the city of Lahore if I had not guarded thee" (*Kim* 84). This represents the weakness and inferiority of the Orientals. Through representing the cultural difference, *Kim* depicts the colonial hierarchy:

There was some justification for Kim,—lie had kicked LalaDinanath's boy off the trunnions,—since the English held the Punjab and Kim was English. Though he was burned black as any native; though lie spoke the vernacular by preference, and his mother-tongue in a clipped uncertain sing-song; though he consorted on terms of perfect equality with the small boys of the bazar; Kim was white. (*Kim* 1)

Here Kipling is carefully defining and asserting the colonial hierarchy and English dominance. "He borrowed right-and left-handedly from all the customs of the country he knew and loved" (*Kim* 76). The combination of Asian and European customs affects Kim culturally. Because the cultural environment is concerned, Kipling considers the English culture the dominant culture in the English-speaking world.

Because of his imperial thoughts, he creates a character like Kim as a sahib. Kim has Irish blood, and due to his superiority, he stands for the British, and simultaneously British culture is considered the superior one. Hurree Babu is the opposite of Kim. He is of Oriental origin, but he is pro-British. He is a spy who risks his life for the British army; moreover, he is very interested in the official British culture because he has a European education. Even though Hurree is pro-British, Kipling treats him as an Oriental. He describes himself in this way: "I am unfortunately Asiatic, which is a serious detriment in some respects. And all-so I am Bengali—a fearful man" (*Kim* 357). Because British culture is considered as the dominant one, he is afraid of his own originality.

### 3.2. Ambivalence of Colonial Discourses in *Kim*

Homi K. Bhabha believes the inconsistency and ambivalent nature of colonial discourse for imposing its domination over another people. He has considered the ambivalence being in the colonial discourse by considering the concepts of ambivalence and liminality which disregards the idea of a "homogenized Other" (52). The identity of Kim is without fixed contours. As it is stated:

The English held the Punjab and Kim was English Though he was burned black as any native; though lie spoke the vernacular by preference, and his mother-tongue in a clipped uncertain sing-song; though he consorted on terms of perfect equality with the small boys of the bazar; Kim was white.  
(*Kim* 1)

The color of his skin and his race makes him complicated. He is Irish by birth, Asiatic by culture and yet he is treated as an Englishman. Edward Said describes him as a "chameleon-like character" (1994: 155). Indeed, his perplexing descriptions make Kim a "tremendous puzzle" (*Kim* 290).

The color of his skin as a form of identity makes him ambivalent. He is defined as the child of a "young colour-sergeant of the Mavericks, an Irish Regiment" (*Kim* 2). He embodies both a native and a sahib simultaneously. As Bhabha states both the colonizers and colonized people have a sense of "unhomeliness" (241) which is a sense of in-betweenness because they are not sure to which culture they belong. When these two cultures clash a "double consciousness" (ibid) is created in these people.

Indeed, Kim does not have a unified and clearly defined religious or social identity. Kim navigates his identity as both a native and a sahib, even questioning Mahbub Ali, "What am I? Mussalman, Hindu, Jain, or Buddhist? That is a hard nut?" (*Kim* 227). Further, Kim goes through a process of instability and ambivalence. He can "change swiftly" his physical appearance (*Kim* 144). He is depicted as "bearing two faces — and two garbs" (*Kim* 63). He is

in a sense of in-betweenness as Mahbub Ali also warns him to "remember this with both kinds of faces. Among Sahibs, never forgetting that a Sahib; among the folk of Hind, always remembering thou art— he paused, with a puzzled smile" (*Kim* 227). Kim becomes a mysterious being who seems capable of changing its physical characteristics just like a chameleon.

All these exemplifications put emphasis on the hybrid identity of Kim: "It needs only to change his clothing, and in a twinkling he would be a low caste Hindi boy" (*Kim* 172). As it is shown, he is transformed: "It was a place of miracles, too, for there went into it at twilight a Mohammedan horse-boy, and there came out an hour later, when all Shimla was wrapped in soft rain-mist, a Eurasian lad" (*Kim* 232). Kim remains in denial and he cannot decide whether he wants to be a Sahib with "the dignity of a letter and a number— and a price upon his head!" (*Kim* 256). On the other side this uncertainty makes him to tell Lama "I am not a Sahib. I am thy chela, and my head is heavy on my shoulders" (*Kim* 433). He shifts between the colonizer who accepts his role and the one who refuses it.

Kim's ambivalence between the desire for union with India and the historic imperative separation from it makes him "little friend of all the World" (*Kim* 4). Hurree Babu has been taught by the sahibs. His British education, for example, his use of Latin words when speaking about Shakespeare and his desire with either the European or the Oriental environment depicts his in-betweenness. Hurree not only does remind his positive attitude towards the Oriental culture but also positively his inclination to western values is always shown. When Babu meets the foreign agents, he acts as a hybrid identity to attract the agents' trust:

Decidedly this fellow is an original' said the taller of the two foreigners. 'He is like the nightmare of a Viennese courier'. He represents in petto India in transition – the monstrous hybridism of East and West,' the Russian replied. 'It is we who can deal with Orientals'. He has lost his own country and has not acquired any other. Be he has a most complete hatred of his conquerors. Listen. He confided to me last night. (*Kim* 382)

Hurree is like other hybrid identities who is stuck in a liminal position and does not have a fixed identity. This also demonstrates the ambivalence in which all hybrid identities are involved.

#### 4. Conclusion

Kipling's *Kim* embodies a colonial discourse that clearly illustrates his endorsement and justification of British colonial authority in India. He encourages the colony-born Sahibs and nominates them as the best ones for understanding and dealing with the Indians. The novel represents the negative stereotyping of the natives which is in contrast with the representation of the British. Through misusing the cultural difference, Kipling negatively represents the Indians to justify the British colonization. Kipling uses his knowledge of India to promote his colonial ideology. *Kim* demonstrates Kipling's negative attitude towards the Indians. It misrepresents the Indians as inferior to the British to keep British dominance over the Indians. The presence of the white man, Kim, becomes a must for the success of Lama's search. Westerners dominate and control the Orient by stereotyping the East as inferior and primitive to show their picture as the higher civilized nations.

The Westerners use the binary opposition to illustrate, the West as the superior and civilized people and the East as inferior, backward, and uncivilized. Thus, Kipling celebrates English culture and its superiority over the Others. Considering the hegemony of the West over the Eastern countries and people, the only relationship between the West and the East is power, domination, and hegemony. Consequently, for the colonizers, it creates a sense of cultural supremacy and perfection in their literature to misrepresent the Orientals. It also makes colonized people think of themselves as inferior humans who require help.

Additionally, the novel reveals how colonization exploits the natives and maintains their subjugation under colonial rule. For instance, Kipling works out the ideology of the superiority and primacy of Western civilization over other supposedly backward Indians. He believes that

the British are the most suitable people to rule over the inferior Indians. Western superiority over Oriental backwardness comes from European culture and identity to impose their particular cultural power over Others. Colonialism affects the human identities of colonizers and colonized people. Through the process of clash of cultures, hybrid identities are reconstructed in an in-between position where they do not understand to which culture they belong. In other words, they are involved in the ambivalence of their behavior.

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